



New Jersey

Final Report
for Fiscal Year 2004

10/30/04



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About NRCS in New Jersey

Service Centers (Field Offices)	Resource Conservation & Development Offices	Plant Materials Center	Other
6	3*	1	1 State Office 2 Support Offices

** Liberty RC&D has an application pending with the Secretary of Agriculture for authorization.*

NRCS in New Jersey has about 75 permanent full-time employees. Locations around the State are: 6 Service Centers which are co-located with USDA, Farm Service Agency (FSA) and USDA, Rural Development (RD); 2 Support Offices which are located with Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) offices; and a Central Support Office co-located with the State Office. In addition, New Jersey is home to the Cape May Plant Materials Center (PMC) that services Coastal regions in the East.

Business tools assessment: Technology tools in use in NRCS NJ

NRCS NJ is keeping up with the high tech changes occurring nationwide and in some cases even staying out in front. Below is a quick summary of our status.

- Customer Toolkit 4.0 with ArcView is being used in all NJ offices by all Conservation Planners.
- Conservation Planners are using ArcView to assist with local conservation by using available layers (themes) which include excellent color-infrared ortho imagery, soils, roads, tidelands easement boundaries, open space boundaries, municipal boundaries, threatened and endangered species areas, hydrologic unit areas, streams, and wetlands.
- Conservation Plans are being uploaded into the Performance and Results System (PRS) in order to track progress, measure future workload and eventually use the Toolkit Next Generation.
- All 2004 EQIP, AMA and WHIP contracts are entered in ProTracts and managers are using this new tool to allocate funds, approve contracts and tract workload and funds.
- Each Office has a Global Positioning System (GPS).
- All offices have a digital camera.
- Engineering Technicians in all three support offices have Total Stations for accurate and fast surveying.
- Most of our offices have "one-person" laser levels for efficient one-person surveys.
- Digital Soil Surveys are currently available for download by Geographic Information Systems (GIS) users for 18 of 21 counties. The digital soil survey for the 19th county should be available by the end of the calendar year.
- Offices have the up-to-date computers with XP and color printers and are ready for the Customer Toolkit Next Generation (5) with ArcGIS.
- The NRCS New Jersey website (<http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov>) is utilized to keep current program information accessible to NRCS staff as well as to the public.

Conservation Technical Assistance

In New Jersey, most NRCS customers are private landowners, municipalities or counties. Much of NRCS technical assistance is provided in cooperation with conservation partners in New Jersey. There are 21 counties and 16 soil conservation districts that share common boundaries. NRCS has strong partnerships with the Soil Conservation Districts and the NJ Association of Conservation Districts. NRCS also works effectively with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and other State and Federal agencies. These partnerships sharpen the delivery of natural resource management and conservation in the State. Some examples of partnership efforts include:

- Farmland Preservation – NJ has an aggressive program. NRCS works cooperatively with the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program through FRPP.
- 8 year cost share for ag conservation practices (NRCS is responsible for development of conservation plans and technical services.)
- Two agreements with Rutgers University to develop technical data
- CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) - buffer initiatives
- Outreach and Education
 - Envirothon (NJ team placed third in national competition July '04)
 - Career Days at Rutgers (Land Grant University)
 - Classroom visits

Grazing Land Conservation Initiative

NJ NRCS staff includes a "Grazing Land Specialist" who works with the producer-driven steering committee, which calls itself the Garden State Grazing Coalition. This group develops and maintains an Action Plan for assisting grazing operations and improving their profitability, sustainability and productivity. Upcoming pasture walks, meetings, public relations activities, and demonstration projects are ongoing.

Plant Materials

The Cape May Plant Materials Center (PMC) is five miles due east of the Avalon, New Jersey beaches and adjacent to New Jersey's most expansive tidal marsh estuaries.

The Cape May PMC is working to:

- develop local eco-types of native plants for Farm Bill conservation programs.
- diversify native plant availability for coastal sand dune systems.
- develop additional native species for tidal soil bio-engineering and stabilization along marshland/tidal marsh estuaries
- develop "how to" re-vegetation technologies for stabilization of highly disturbed areas.

Recently the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge Two Mile Beach Unit managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) demolished an array of obsolete buildings and structures, and wanted to restore the ecosystem; this area has global significance for migrating birds in the Atlantic Flyway. The FWS and the NRCS Cape May Plant Materials Center worked together to restore quality habitat for migratory birds using this site.

In October of 2003, the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge System opened a \$10 million visitor center providing an educational experience to the refuge's 1.5 million annual visitors. Working with FWS leadership, the USDA NRCS Plant Materials Center installed a highly visible interpretive garden for conservation plants developed by the program.

Cape May PMC has also worked with the National Park Service on projects in Assateague Island (VA), Gateway National Recreation Area Sandy Hook Unit (NJ), Cape Cod National Seashore (NJ), and Acadia National Park (ME). The PMC has also partnered with Rutgers Cooperative Extension, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Army Corps of Engineers to further the propagation technologies of several native plants.

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)

Liberty RC&D (Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Passaic Counties) – application pending

The newest RC&D Council in New Jersey, Liberty RC&D, was founded in 1994 to address urban environmental needs as the Urban Conservation Action Partnership (UCAP). In 2004, the UCAP Board re-organized and assumed the name Liberty RC&D in anticipation of approval of its application for authorization as an RC&D Area to the US Secretary of Agriculture.

NRCS provides staff to assist Liberty's RC&D Council with guidance, advice and technical assistance to carry out objectives and goals. Projects now underway include:

- improving water quality in four Union County parks using riparian buffers.
- native plantings and fencing.
- expanding an existing nature trail by 6,700 feet in Westfield's Brightwood Park with the installation of footbridges and park benches. A trail map was also developed and published.

North Jersey RC&D (Sussex, Warren, Morris, Somerset, Hunterdon, Union Counties)

Through the development of strong partnerships, the Council has spearheaded an array of projects designed to effectively address resource concerns in the RC&D area.

- *Building Greener Communities – Planning for Woodland Conservation*, a handbook developed to assist communities in dealing with developmental sprawl and destruction of their forest resources, was awarded for Outstanding Environmental Achievement by New Jersey American Planning Association. RC&D partnered with the Hunterdon County Planning Board with grant funds from the USDA Forest Service to develop and produce the handbook for distribution and to present four workshops.
- *Restoring Our Streams*, a workshop designed to emphasize bio-engineering techniques that can be used to protect and restore all streambanks and enhance riparian buffers has been presented six times by North Jersey RC&D and partners. Riparian buffers have been installed in two locations in Warren County. A set of 10 Riparian Buffer Fact Sheets for Northern New Jersey were developed and are available on North Jersey RC&D's website <http://www.northjerseyrcd.org>
- Ongoing Integrated Crop Management (ICM) services supplied by RC&D's Certified Crop Advisor supporting nutrient and pest management were supplied to 16 farmers on 6,500 acres in 2003 with plans to expand service in 2004.
- North Jersey RC&D led regional efforts to coordinate the resource management in the Upper Delaware Watershed and the Walkkill Watershed. Three Septic Management Workshops were conducted in 2003.

South Jersey RC&D (Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, and Salem Counties)

South Jersey RC&D has several ongoing projects. Visit them online at <http://www.sjrkd.org>

- The South Jersey RC&D founded the R.I.S.E. (Resource Information Serving Everyone) network of three weather stations in 1992; the network has since grown to a total of eighteen weather stations in eight counties. The weather data provided is used by agricultural producers, homeowners, Rutgers University, engineering firms, and utility companies.
- South Jersey RC&D partnered with the Southern Jersey Quail Unlimited chapter to create a project in Cumberland County's Buckshutem Watershed Management Area to create almost 500 acres of a savanna-style habitat for grassland birds, butterflies and moths.
- A further partnership between RC&D and the local Quail Unlimited chapter resulted in a series of four Wildlife Habitat Workshops.
- The South Jersey RC&D Council is working with the Camden, Gloucester and Freehold Soil Conservation Districts to model storm water in small watersheds.

Soil Survey

The NRCS Soils Staff in New Jersey consists of the State Soil Scientist, Assistant State Soil Scientist, and two MLRA (Major Land Resource Area) Project Leaders.

NRCS soil scientists in New Jersey have produced completed surveys by county in three formats: paper copies, GIS download, and as pdf files. Soil Explorer, a CD with specialized content for land use decision-makers and educators, was completed for Somerset County and is under development for Cape May County and Sussex County. The Cape Atlantic Conservation District, Sussex Soil Conservation District, the State Soil Conservation Committee, and Cape May County supported this project.

Three counties requested soil survey projects and then raised funding to defray the cost of the work. The Warren County Soil Conservation District helped obtain \$90,000 for partial funding from the State of New Jersey for the 4-year project of completing the survey in Warren County. Sussex County Soil Conservation District, State Soil Conservation Committee, and Sussex County government raised more than \$200,000 toward the survey work in their county. Gloucester County contributed \$40,000 to the survey process and provided support through the Gloucester County Board of Freeholders and the Gloucester County SCD.

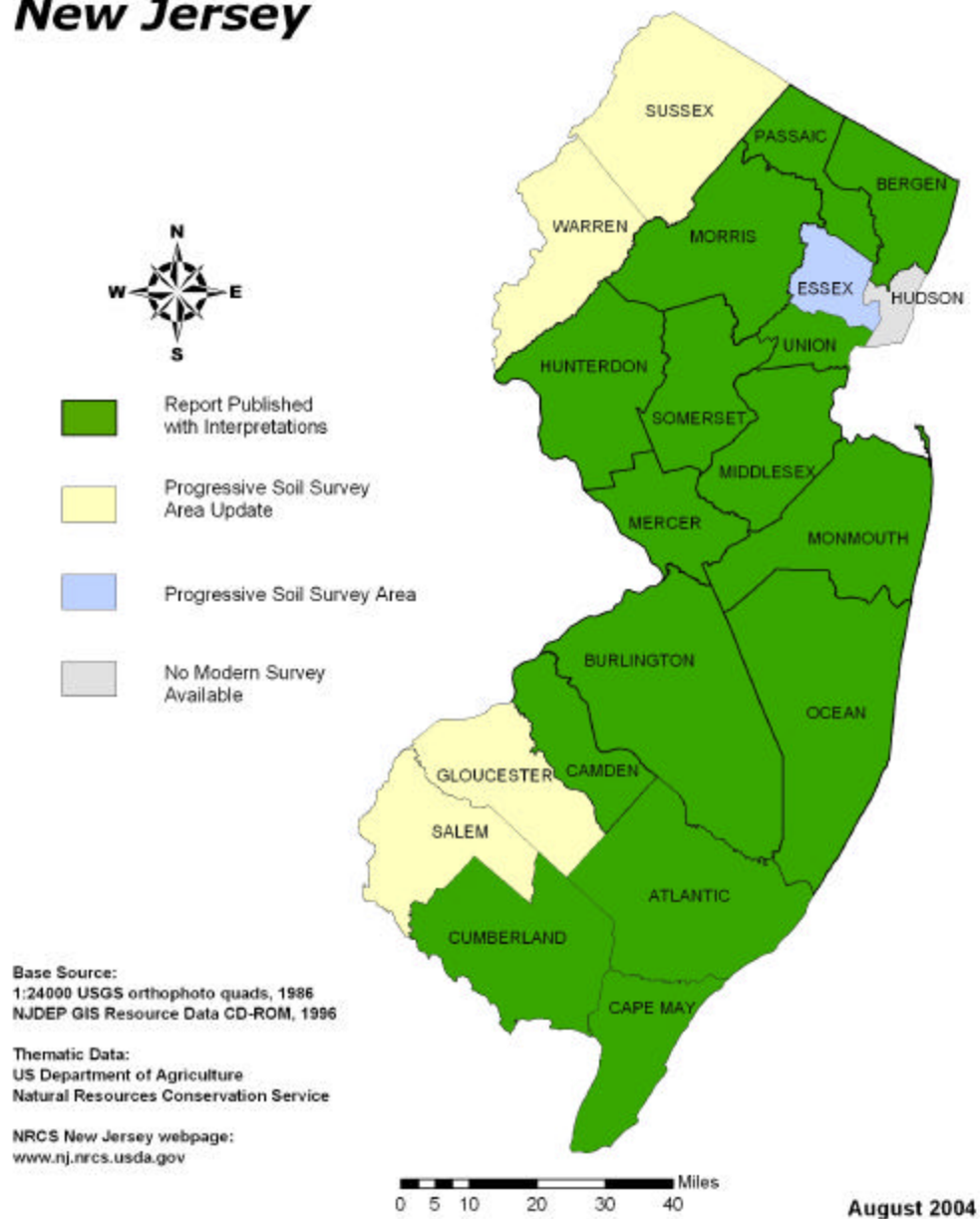
The Hudson-Essex-Passaic Soil Conservation District in cooperation with the State Soil Conservation Committee and Hudson County has requested \$100,000 in funding from the New Jersey Legislature for a modern soil survey of Hudson County. Hudson County is the only New Jersey County without a pending or completed soil survey. If funded, the survey will be published in digital formats.

New Jersey Surveys Available in 2004 (8/24/2004)

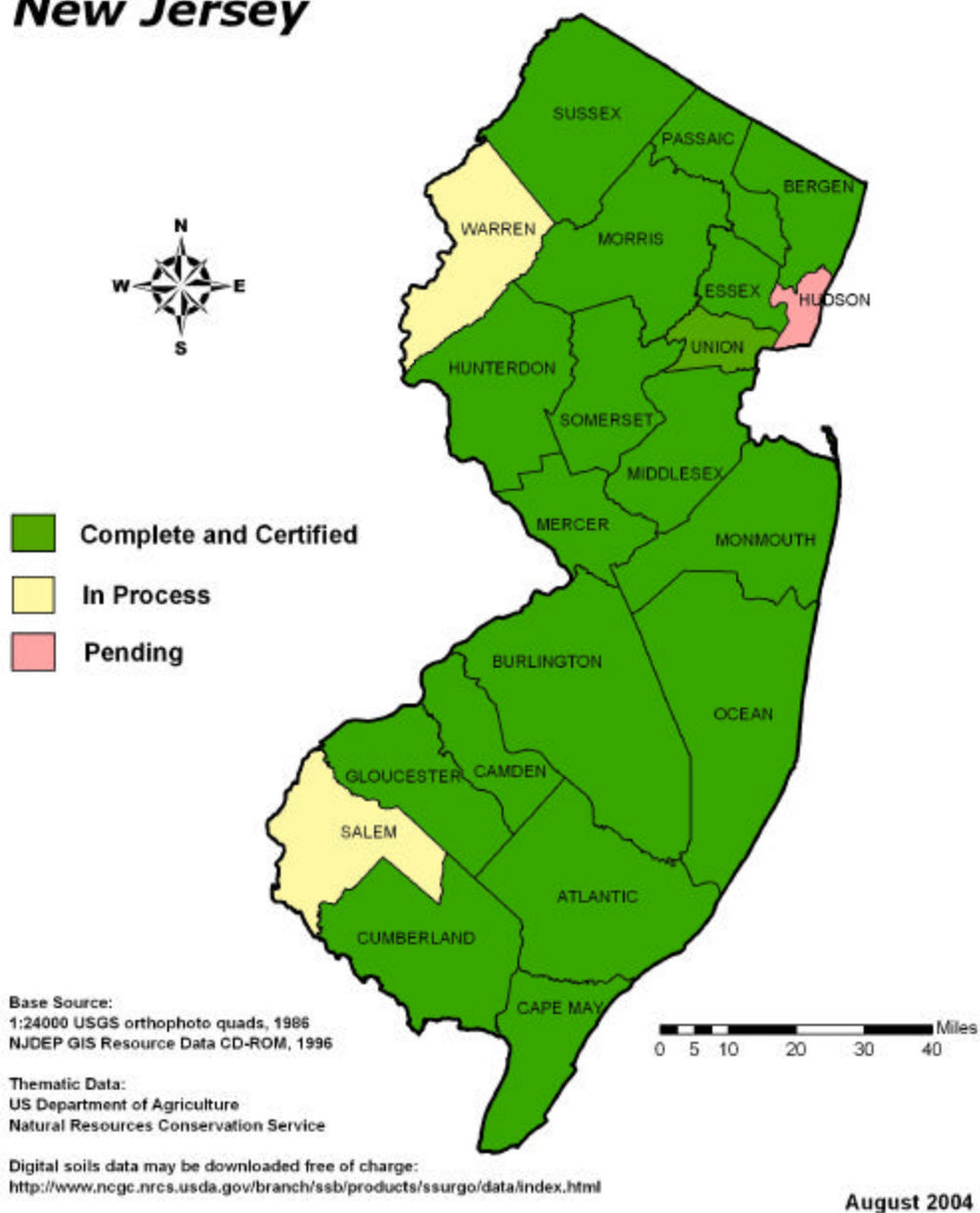
NJ County	Digital Format for GIS, online	Soil Survey, book	Soil Survey, pdf on CD ROM	Primary Source Location
Atlantic	Available	Available	Historic	Vineland Service Center
Bergen	Available	Available	Not Available	Morris Plains Service Center
Burlington	Available	Out of Print	Historic	Hainesport Service Center
Camden	Available	Out of Print	Historic	Hainesport Service Center
Cape May	Available	Available	Available	Vineland Service Center
Cumberland	Available	Out of Print *	Not Available	Vineland Service Center
Essex	Available	Out of Print *	Not Available	Morris Plains Service Center
Gloucester	Available	Out of Print *	Not Available	Woodstown Service Center
Hudson	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Morris Plains Service Center
Hunterdon	Available	Available	Not Available	Frenchtown Service Center
Mercer	Available	Out of Print	Historic	Freehold Service Center
Middlesex	Available	Available	Historic	Freehold Service Center
Monmouth	Available	Available	Not Available	Freehold Service Center
Morris	Available	Reprint for Sale	Historic	Morris County SCD
Ocean	Available	Available	Historic	Hainesport Service Center
Passaic	Available	Available	Not Available	Morris Plains Service Center
Salem	In Process	Out of Print	Not Available	Woodstown Service Center
Somerset	Available	Available	Historic	Frenchtown Service Center
Sussex	Available	Out of Print *	Not Available	Hackettstown Service center
Union	Available	Available	Available	Frenchtown Service Center
Warren	In Process	Available	Not Available	Hackettstown Service center

* Survey Update not yet available in print form.

Soil Survey Progress New Jersey



Digital Soil Survey Projects New Jersey



Watershed Programs

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention

Watershed Planning

The Natural Resources Conservation Service along with county Soil Conservation Districts, units of government, watershed associations and others, develop and implement watershed plans throughout New Jersey. The purpose of these plans may include: watershed protection, flood prevention, groundwater recharge, water quality improvement, recreation development, and wetland enhancement and protection.

In New Jersey NRCS has assisted local sponsors in the development and implementation of nearly twenty watershed plans.

Following Hurricane Floyd, planning assistance was provided within the Millstone River Watershed. A steering committee identified a number of objectives with flood damage reduction being the top priority. Two priority flood damage areas were identified, namely the lower Millstone River valley and Harrys Brook. NRCS analyzed several alternatives including flood water storage at 26 sites throughout the 184,300 acre watershed and levees at four locations. Neither alternative was found to be cost effective. Nonstructural alternatives were analyzed for the Borough of Millstone but also found to be not cost effective. NRCS is now assisting several of the municipalities in the high priority areas to develop flood mitigation plans which target the repetitive flood loss properties (See Watersheds – Other).

NRCS is assisting the New Jersey Water Supply Authority in its effort to protect one of New Jersey's key drinking water resources, the Delaware & Raritan Canal. The Canal, which begins at the Delaware River near Stockton, provides 100 million gallons per day to Central New Jersey. In addition to water from the Delaware River, the Canal also receives water – and major pollutant loads – from two streams in western Hunterdon County. These streams are the Lockatong Creek and Wickecheoke Creek watershed.

Watershed Rehabilitation

NRCS is assessing dams for potential rehabilitation needs in the Paulins Kill Watershed at Newton in Sussex County and at Amwell Lake in the Stony Brook Watershed near Princeton in Mercer County.

Watershed – Other

Flood Mitigation Plans are used to target mitigation efforts to repetitive flood loss structures (those which have two or more claims against the National Flood Insurance Program).

NRCS assisted Franklin Township, Somerset County, NJ, to develop a Flood Mitigation Plan which was delivered in February 2004. The plan is available for download on our website.

Also three municipalities (Princeton Township in Mercer County and Montgomery Township and Millstone Borough in Somerset County) are funding planning assistance from NRCS to produce flood mitigation plans.

WATERSHED STATUS MAP NEW JERSEY

SEPTEMBER 2004

COMPLETED PROJECTS

- 1 Pequest River (Pilot)
- 2 Stony Brook
- 3 Silver Lake-Locust Island
- 4 Town Bank
- 5 Paulins Kill
- 6 Tributaries of Maurice River Cove
- 7 Parkers Creek
- 8 Riggins Ditch
- 9 Middle Neck
- 10 Furnace Brook
- 11 Assunpink Creek
- 12 Navesink River
- 13 Upper Salem River
- 14 Clove Brook

ACTIVE PROJECTS

- 15 Pine Mount - Mill Creek
- 16 Reapaupo Creek
- 17 Millstone River
- 18 Lockatong and Wickecheoke Creek

PENDING PROJECTS

- 19 North Branch Rancocas Creek

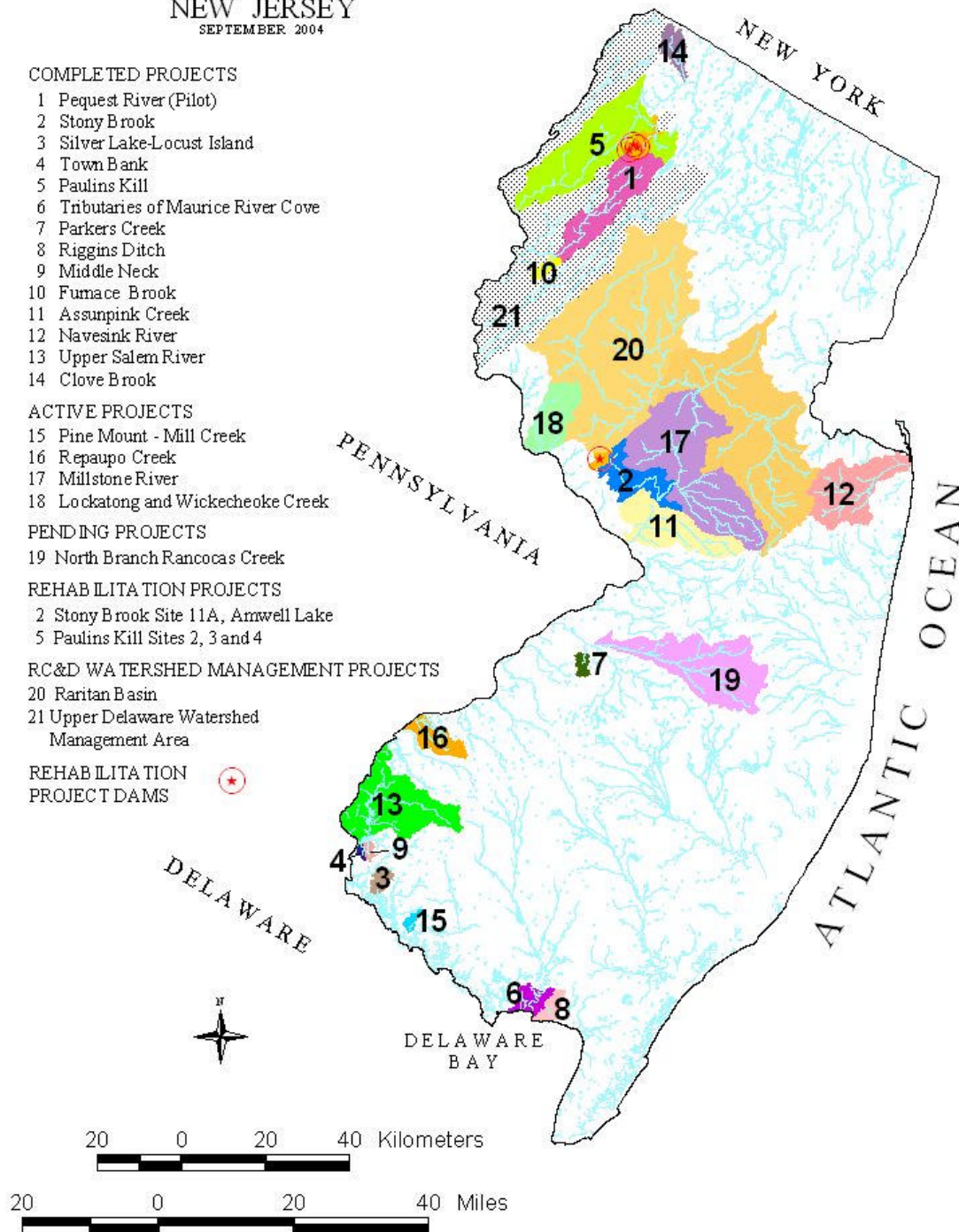
REHABILITATION PROJECTS

- 2 Stony Brook Site 11A, Amwell Lake
- 5 Paulins Kill Sites 2, 3 and 4

RC&D WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

- 20 Raritan Basin
- 21 Upper Delaware Watershed Management Area

REHABILITATION PROJECT DAMS



Farm Bill Program Activity

Approximately 600 customers were assisted in FY2003 in the development of conservation plans on about 21,000 acres. In that fiscal year NRCS Service Centers primarily provided assistance for Nutrient Management and Pest Management, Erosion Reduction, and Irrigation Water Management.

New Jersey received \$15,690,050 in FY2004 through the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) for eligible New Jersey landowners and agricultural producers through five USDA voluntary programs. This was more than double the FY2003 funding allocated for New Jersey. The program funds have been used as follows:

Statewide Program Implementation - FY 2004*

Program	Funded Projects		Unfunded - Backlog	
	Contracts (Acres)	Amount	Applications	Estimated Cost
EQIP	144 (3579)	\$ 4,486,786	99	\$ 2,382,316
WHIP	32 (866.1)	\$ 342,038	21	\$ 192,600
AMA	27 (876.0)	\$ 396,566	41	\$ 584,177
GRP	11 (755.5)	\$ 226,348	0	\$ 0
FRPP	31 (2,677)	\$ 5,293,780 *	150	\$ 20 million
WRP	1 (2,200)	\$ 5,000,000	2605 acres	\$ 2,718,000

Program Implementation by County – FY 2004*

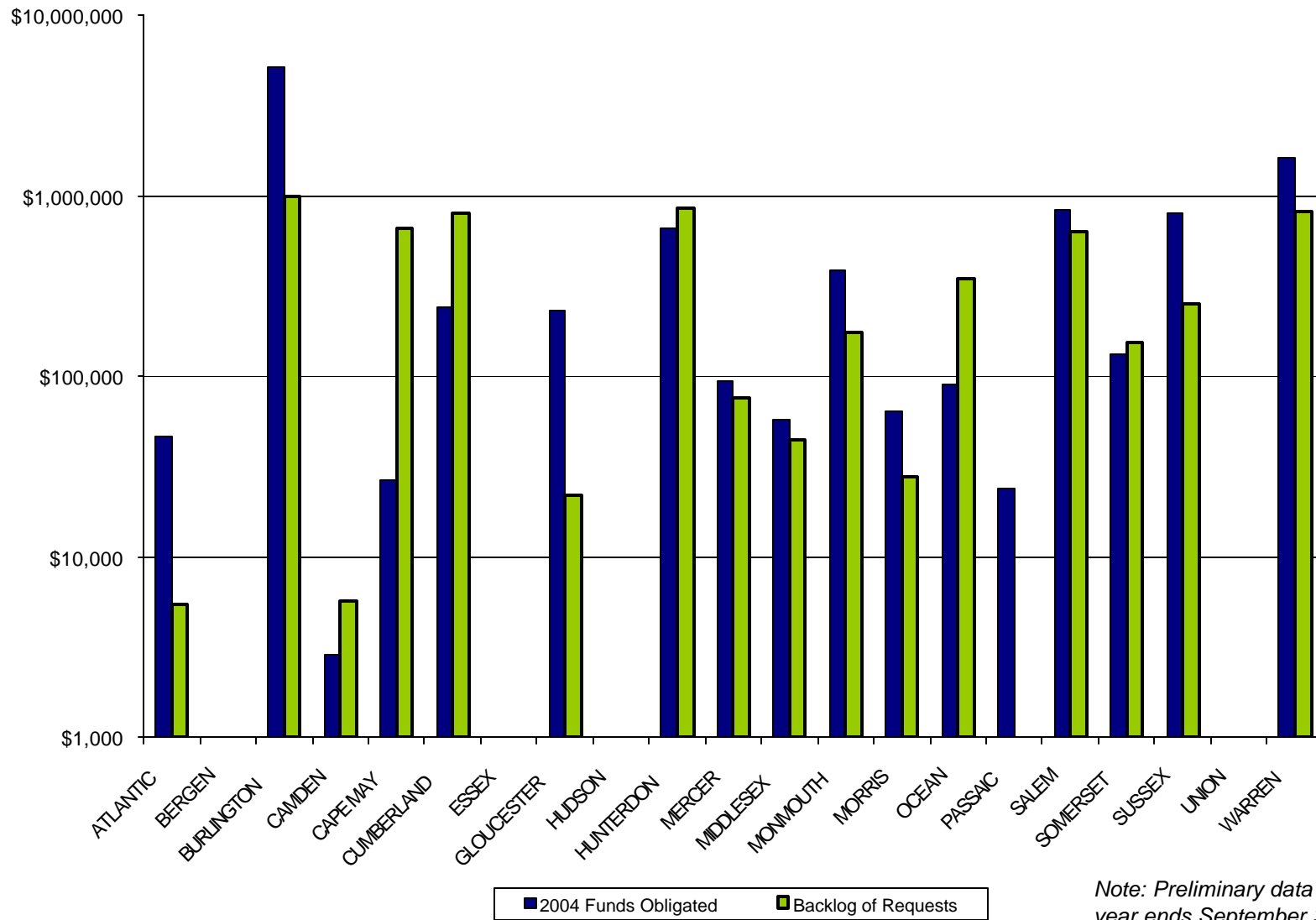
County	EQIP		WHIP		AMA		GRP		FRPP *	
	#	\$	#	\$	#	\$	Ac	\$	Ac	\$
Atlantic	8	9,196	1		1	35,010	1	14,970		
Bergen										
Burlington #	3	151,963	3	7,502					180	33,491
Camden	1	2,859							70	1,307,570
Cape May	1	1,431	1	25,500						
Cumberland	17	220,356	1	4,651						
Essex										
Gloucester	11	231,861								
Hudson										
Hunterdon	26	502,007	2	10,413	14	147,999			441	834,188
Mercer	4	88,427	1	6,061					185	396,869
Middlesex			1	4,830	1	52,253			404	1,372,748
Monmouth	9	352,456	2	29,624			1	16,140	136	273,287
Morris	3	61,193	6	25,362						
Ocean	1	52,325	1	31,231	1	6,611				
Passaic	1	23,744								
Salem	12	771,047	1	1,433	1	28,863	3	28,361	270	78,704
Somerset	11	48,988	3	84,148	2	39,488				
Sussex	11	888,909	3	11,468	3	43,016	2	22,340	865	585,886
Union										
Warren	28	1,256,486	6	97,077	4	43,326	4	144,537	126	111,037

* approximate – actual numbers may change upon easement closing

Burlington County – One WRP project - \$5,000,000

@ includes easement purchase value

Farm Bill Workload



Note: Preliminary data – fiscal year ends September 30

Farm Bill Accomplishments

Farm Bill programs make technical assistance and funding available to private landowners and agricultural producers for the planning and implementation of conservation practices. In New Jersey Farm Bill dollars promote the development and use of conservation plans and nutrient management systems, wildlife habitat creation and enhancement, wetlands restoration, grazing land maintenance, and development of Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans.

Below is a summary of the key planning and implementation accomplishments for the fiscal year. For the most part, planning is a result of current year requests for assistance from private landowners applying for current year programs. Implementation is for prior year contracted practices reported through September 30, allowing for the time needed to prepare practice designs and oversee construction.

Statewide Accomplishments – FY 2004

	Planned	Applied	Estimated Annual Need
Conservation Planning on Cropland (Ac)	14,526	10,039	47,551
Nutrient Management (Ac)	15,641	5,058	23,724
Wildlife Habitat (Ac)	4,995	1,778	4,622
Wetland Restoration (Ac)	14	78	375
Grazing Lands (Ac)	4,068	2,109	8645
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) (No)	46	12	108

Accomplishments by County - FY 2004

County	Conservation Plans (all lands)		Nutrient Management		Wildlife Habitat		Wetlands		Grazing Lands		CNMP (Ac)	
	Planned	Applied	Planned	Applied	Planned	Applied	Planned	Applied	Planned	Applied	Planned	Applied
Atlantic	516	324	407	15		5						
Bergen	73	36	23	10			1	1		2		
Burlington	983	1,109	406	457	65	31	44		107	213	30	32
Camden	33	29							29	4	25	
Cape May	382	91	373		8							
Cumberland	1,663	1,116	1,535	975	6	136					1014	
Essex	35				67							
Gloucester	936	591	1,435	149					148		251	140
Hudson												
Hunterdon	3,628	1,647	1,524		328	234	3		232	119	245	
Mercer	729	659	428		39	51	20	20	73	277	118	57
Middlesex	1,656	1,742	169	43								118
Monmouth	2,207	2,178	154	71		110			336	289	190	
Morris	488	67			1,940			5	20			
Ocean	2,889	2,654	120		105	28						
Passaic	49				31		2		9		1	
Salem	4,416	3,522	4,236	1,554	1,387	1074	38	10	2,131	1,131	174	
Somerset	1,842	1,795	761	304	125				34	18	56	
Sussex	778	1,838	698	1,044	209	82		60	720	56		1,588
Union												
Warren	3,236	756	3,373	437	186	28		2	230		117	
Totals	26,537	20,156	15,641	5,058	4,995	1,778	108	98	4,068	2,109	2,220	2,192

Conservation Practices Planned and Applied in FY2004

Conservation Practice	Planned	Applied
Access Road (ft)	8,202	100
Agrichemical Mixing Facility (no)	11	
Animal Trails and Walkways (ft)	2,572	
Brush Management (314) (ac)	540	270
Composting Facility (317) (no)	13	
Conservation Cover (327) (ac)	169	
Conservation Crop Rotation (328) (ac)	11,803	6,563
Contour Buffer Strips (332) (ac)	107	
Contour Farming (330) (ac)	615	100
Contour Orchard or Fruit Area (ac)	30	
Cover Crop (ac)	5,723	2,065
Critical Area Planting (ac)	6,289	5,816
Cross Slope Farming (ac)	10	
Deep Tillage (ac)	396	
Dike (ft)	140,150	
Diversion (ft)	36,854	3,300
Early Successional Habitat Management (ac)	951	194
Fence (ft)	191,573	17,562
Field Border (ft)	61,279	13,682
Filter Strip (ac)	335	11
Fishpond Management (no)	1	1
Forage Harvest Management (ac)	1,097	86
Forest Site Preparation (ac)	298	
Forest Stand Improvement (ac)	359	399
Grade Stabilization Structure (no)	6	
Grassed Waterway (ac)	162	10
Heavy Use Area Protection (ac)	8,399	685
Hedgerow Planting (ft)	13,350	
Herbaceous Wind Barriers (ft)	191,400	
Irrigation Land Leveling (ac)		4
Irrigation Storage Reservoir (ac-ft)	1	2
Irrigation System, Microirrigation (no)	102	32
Irrigation System, Sprinkler (no)	89	40
Irrigation System, Surface (no)	1	1

Conservation Practice	Planned	Applied
Irrigation Water Conveyance, Pipeline, Low-Pressure, Underground, Plastic (ft)	12,290	8,671
Irrigation Water Management (ac)	6,011	504
Land Clearing (ac)	47	45
Land Smoothing (ac)	64	4
Lined Waterway or Outlet (ft)	8,919	
Manure Transfer (no)	9	
Mulching (ac)	101	
Nutrient Management (ac)	15,641	5,058
Obstruction Removal (ac)	80	0
Pasture and Hay Planting (ac)	2,366	412
Pest Management (ac)	13,191	3,727
Pipeline (ft)	56,010	5,025
Pond (no)	14	4
Pond Sealing, Bentonite Sealant (no)	1	
Precision Land Forming (ac)	25	51
Prescribed Burning (ac)	289	
Prescribed Grazing (ac)	4,068	1,797
Pumping Plant (no)	6	
Recreation Area Improvement (ac)	6	
Residue Management, Mulch Till (ac)	2,722	220
Residue Management, No-Till/Strip Till (ac)	3,641	1,471
Residue Management, Seasonal (3ac)	4,382	520
Riparian Forest Buffer (ac)	39	8
Riparian Herbaceous Cover (ac)	76	35
Roof Runoff Structure (no)	64	5
Row Arrangement (ac)	298	59
Runoff Management System (ac)	3	1
Spoil Spreading (ft)	3,403	3,400
Spring Development (no)	1	
Stream Habitat Improvement (ac)	6	
Streambank and Shoreline Protection (ft)	75	950
Stripcropping (ac)	296	27

Conservation Practice	Planned	Applied
Structure for Water Control (no)	34	2
Subsurface Drain (ft)	20,480	2,820
Surface Drainage, Field Ditch (ft)	10,980	500
Surface Drainage, Main or Lateral (ft)	17,110	1,700
Terrace (ft)	8,900	
Tree/Shrub Establishment (ac)	401	280
Underground Outlet (ft)	11,852	1,490
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (ac)	3,369	1,530
Use Exclusion (ac)	149	
Vegetative Barrier (ft)	2,350	

Conservation Practice	Planned	Applied
Waste Storage Facility (no)	35	6
Waste Utilization (ac)	2,220	847
Wastewater Treatment Strip (ac)	2	
Water Well (no)	53	9
Watering Facility (no)	187	35
Wetland Restoration (ac)	14	78
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (ac)	93	20
Wildlife Watering Facility (no)	2	
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (ft)	10,375	1,920
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation (ft)	3,610	3,260

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)

Approximately \$396,500 of AMA funds was obligated in FY2004. In NJ AMA targets limited resource, small scale, and beginning farmers with funds to mitigate the risk of adopting conservation measures.

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

No watersheds in New Jersey were selected for 2004. At least one watershed will be selected for CSP participation in FY 2005, with producers who have adopted conservation systems eligible to receive incentive payments to maintain and/or enhance the resource protection they have achieved.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

NJ received \$4,537,100 through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). These funds have been obligated to landowner contracts in FY2004. EQIP provides financial assistance for producers to adopt basic conservation systems and to try new and innovative practices.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

NJ received \$5,349,541 through the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) for FY2004. New Jersey's FRPP allocation has been among the top three awards nationally throughout the history of the program. With intense pressure to develop areas to accommodate the large and growing population, preserving farmland and open space is a major issue in the Garden State. The 2002 Census of Agriculture reported the loss of 121 farms and 51,227 acres of farm land in a five year period.

Working through existing programs, USDA-NRCS partners with State or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. New Jersey has reached a major milestone in its 20-year history of farmland preservation with the preservation of the 1,000th farm and over 100,000 acres.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

A total of \$5,000,000 was allocated for NJ WRP in FY2004. These funds will cover the conservation easement and wetlands restoration costs for the 2,200 acre Franklin Parker Preserve in Burlington County. The landowner, New Jersey Conservation, recently acquired this property, which surrounds the Village of Chatsworth in Woodland Township, for \$13 million. The project encompasses part of Tabernacle and Bass River Townships in the heart of the Pine Barrens.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

NRCS was allocated \$415,000 for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) which addresses six priorities in New Jersey:

- Lower Cape May Priority Area - a priority wildlife habitat area
- Bog Turtle Habitat - on lands providing habitat for the federally threatened bog turtle
- Early Successional Habitat- dedicated to early successional wildlife habitat, such as grassland restoration
- Riparian Habitat
- Invasive Exotic Vegetation Control
- School Site Habitat for environmental education

WHIP has been a small, but very successful program in New Jersey since 1998. The program is quite diverse and has opened up new areas, new clients, and new ground for NRCS. In NJ, NRCS works with 20-30 individuals or groups each year to fund projects from 0.1 acre to 100 acres in size. We work with individual private landowners, local municipalities, watershed associations, schools, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Contracts have ranged from \$1000 to \$60,000. Many new partners have been involved as well as traditional NRCS partners.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

The NJ NRCS allocation for the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) was \$357,700. The NJ NRCS Grazing Lands Specialist notes that this 2004 funding for GRP contracts was double GRP funding in 2003. This increase reflects the need New Jersey has for assistance in the protection of vital grasslands resource in the State. Applications are ranked according to the risk of conversion of enrolled acres and the biodiversity of animals and plants. Contracts are due to be awarded soon.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

This program is managed by FSA in NJ. There are a few CRP sign ups. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), which leverages state funds with the federal program to increase cost share incentives, was recently approved in NJ. The program is in the initial stage and sign ups have begun.

Earmark funding of \$900,000

This earmark involved the delivery of technical assistance to install conservation practices associated with NJ agricultural cost share programs including the Conservation Cost Share Program and Farmland Preservation Program. Using state funds to match USDA Farm Bill (EQIP) funding attracted much interest on the part of agricultural producers to install conservation practices. These additional funds have allowed NRCS to work with more producers than would otherwise be possible with USDA funds alone. It has permitted the existing NRCS delivery system to provide assistance to producers, rather than creating a less efficient system. It has also provided the opportunity to work closely with Soil Conservation Districts to provide the necessary technical assistance to install these practices. The additional funds have been used to hire staff to provide more timely practice installation. This helped avoid the multi year delays experienced in prior years. Over the last 2 years, NRCS has hired additional staff at eight locations and has provided funds to the NJ Soil Conservation Districts to fund 12 other field positions (50% share).

This year the 8 NRCS and 12 SCD staff have supported:

- 213 Contracts through Farm Bill in 2004 totaling \$10,485,720 providing assistance to 180 farmers
- 74 Contracts through the NJ 8-year Cost Share (from 9/2003 to 9/2004) totaling \$769,441 with 68 farmers assisted

The conservation practices planned and installed as a result of earmark funding in 2004 include a wide range of soil and water related practices such as irrigation water management, integrated crop management, animal waste management, soil erosion control and others. The benefits of these practices are predominantly linked to water quality and maintaining soil productivity.

Earmark funds used in Hunterdon SCD support:

This funding was used to hire 1 administrative and 4 technical employees.

Counties and areas served: Hunterdon, Somerset, Union, Sussex, Warren, Morris, Hudson, Essex, Bergen, and Passaic

Earmark funds used in Gloucester SCD support:

This funding was used to hire 2 administrative and 4 technical employees.

Counties and areas served: Cape May, Cumberland, Atlantic, Salem, Gloucester

Earmark funds used in Mercer SCD support:

This funding was used to hire 1 technical employee.

Counties and areas served: Burlington, Camden, Ocean, Monmouth, Middlesex, Mercer